

Library Cuts: Well-being Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number: 1247

Brief description: A 50% reduction of opening hours and associated reductions amounting to a c30% budget cut for Libraries/One Stop Shops across the county

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Responsible Service: Housing and Communities Service

Localities affected by the proposal: Whole County,

Who will be affected by the proposal? Staff; partners (those who deliver services from Library Buildings or who rely on Libraries to support members of the public with access - eg Bus Passes); Library Users, One Stop Shop Users.

Was this impact assessment completed as a group? No

Summary and Conclusion

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Score for the sustainability of the approach

2 out of 4 stars

Actual score : 21 / 36

Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

Long term

While the budget pressures demand a short term response, consideration has been made in developing the proposals to protect Libraries as much as possible - with the hope that when budget allows the service can be expanded again - and to ensure equity of access for Library users by keeping all libraries open, albeit for significantly reduced hours. Some consideration has been put into making use of Library buildings while the library service is closed, so as to maximise use of valuable assets.

Prevention

There will have to be greater access to services through digital means which, by definition, increases independence, although response to the consultation highlights the significant amount of digital exclusion that still exists for all age-groups across the county. Many of the buildings have important historical significance so there will be ongoing costs to managing the buildings: they could be used by DCC or partners during the times that Libraries are closed to the public.

Integration

While Libraries are an important element of DCC's approach to greater individual and community independence and resilience, and they contribute significantly to DCC's commitment to extending the use of the Welsh Language across the County, the budget shortfall is the most urgent demand on the

Library Cuts

Council. Total budget for Libraries is £1.6m, so a 30% cut, while delivering severe service cuts, is a relatively small contributor to the estimated total budget shortfall.

Collaboration

Proposal has been developed with internal partners only at this stage: external partners have been engaged during the consultation process and future discussions will hopefully mitigate against budget cuts by maximising available resources, including funding.

Involvement

Staff, library users and partners have been consulted on the proposals to inform the final decision and implementation. Further engagement will continue to mitigate the impact of budget cuts.

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall impact
A prosperous Denbighshire	Negative
A resilient Denbighshire	Neutral
A healthier Denbighshire	Negative
A more equal Denbighshire	Negative
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Negative
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Negative
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Neutral

Main conclusions

Library Cuts

DCC's Library Service over the last six years has been developed in order to make an ever greater contribution to the Wellbeing of Future Generations, so a reduction in service is necessarily going to result in a negative impact on the goals. Mitigation of the negative impacts will need to be considered through engagement with staff, Library users and partners.

The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Libraries are an important part of the town centre offer; closures will impact on Town Centre useage and associated income.

In addition, redundancies are likely

Further actions required

Explore alternative uses of Library buildings while they are closed to the public

Full use of staff redeployment policy

Positive impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Greater use of digital access to services

Fewer journeys

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

No known impacts

Economic development

No known impacts

Quality skills for the long term

No known impacts

Quality jobs for the long term

No known impacts

Childcare

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Longer journeys to open library

Heating/Lighting of buildings not in use

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

Libraries are widely recognised as a community asset therefore an important part of community infrastructure.

Economic development

Likely redundancies.

Libraries make an impact to Town Centre spend (£6 per visit), so reduction in physical visits is likely to negatively impact Town Centre vibrancy

Quality skills for the long term

No known impacts

Quality jobs for the long term

Fewer people required to deliver services

Childcare

No known impacts

A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

While there are potentially positive and negative impacts they are negligible and probably cancel each other out.

Further actions required

To be discussed during consultation.

Positive impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

No known impacts

Biodiversity in the built environment

No known impacts

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

Less usage of libraries will result in reduced creation of waste.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

Possible reduction in energy/fuel consumption if Library buildings are not made available outside Library opening hours.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

No known impacts

Flood risk management

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

No known impacts

Biodiversity in the built environment

No known impacts

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

No known impacts

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

No known impacts

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

Libraries are an important place for knowledge and contribute significantly to people's awareness of current issues such as environment and diversity

Flood risk management

No known impacts

A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so any reduction in their services will

have a negative impact.

Further actions required

Discuss with partners how access can be maximised during opening hours, or facilitated during hours of closure.

Positive impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

No known impacts

Access to good quality, healthy food

No known impacts

People's emotional and mental well-being

No known impacts

Access to healthcare

No known impacts

Participation in leisure opportunities

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. Libraries are a source of information and support, partners base themselves there. Libraries are an inclusive place for people to connect and participate in activities, e.g. reading groups, baby and toddler groups etc.

Access to good quality, healthy food

No known impacts

People's emotional and mental well-being

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. Libraries are a source of information and support, partners base themselves there. Libraries are an inclusive place for people to connect and participate in activities, e.g. reading groups, baby and toddler groups etc.

Access to healthcare

Libraries host several health and social care drop-ins and events.

Participation in leisure opportunities

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. There could also be a differential impact, whereby libraries operating at a reduced level in deprived areas disproportionately negatively impact people experiencing exclusion, inequality, socio-economic deprivation.

Further actions required

Seek opportunities to work with partners to mitigate the negative impact

Positive impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

No known impacts

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

No known impacts

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

No known impacts

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

Library Cuts

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

Further actions required

Consider mitigating actions with partners. Seek to rebuild Library service as soon as budget is available.

Positive impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

No known impacts

Community participation and resilience

No known impacts

The attractiveness of the area

No known impacts

Connected communities

No known impacts

Rural resilience

Library Cuts

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. Libraries are a universally recognised place of refuge: eg Croeso Cynnes/Warm Welcome hubs, access to partner services etc.

Community participation and resilience

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. A reduction in service and services operated by partners from libraries could lead to people participating in community initiatives much less.

The attractiveness of the area

No known impacts

Connected communities

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

Rural resilience

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact

Negative

Justification for impact

Library Cuts

A reduction in Library opening hours will 'hollow out' the added value of the service provided, including early language development through to Welsh Language reading groups and to dementia-friendly fully bilingual spaces.

Further actions required

Signpost to alternative provision.

Positive impacts identified:

People using Welsh

No known impacts

Promoting the Welsh language

No known impacts

Culture and heritage

No known impacts

Negative impacts identified:

People using Welsh

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. staff in libraries include fluent Welsh speakers. Supportive environments to use or practice Welsh for learners

Promoting the Welsh language

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact. Libraries regularly host Welsh reading groups, book launches etc. Libraries are a source of information and resources to support the Welsh language.

Culture and heritage

Library Cuts

Libraries are an important contributor to this well-being goal, so the reduction in their services will have a negative impact.

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

There are small positive and negative impacts which cancel each other out.

Further actions required

Discuss alternatives during consultation.

Positive impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

No known impacts

Human rights

No known impacts

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

There will remain a Library presence in all 8 towns across the County

Reducing climate change

Reduction in public access to buildings with associated risks of heat loss through open doors

Negative impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

Library Cuts

No known impacts

Human rights

Libraries an important place to gain knowledge, including of human rights, and therefore a reduced service curtails access

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

Provision will be reduced

Reducing climate change

Empty buildings being kept accessible.